Unlocking the Mystery: Introduction to Bible Study Translations

Dead languages
Mark 12:30 quoting Deuteronomy 6:5

Aramaic: Ezra 4:8-6:18, Ezra 7:12-26, Daniel 2:4b-7:28, Jeremiah 10:11, Genesis 31:47, Mark 14:36, Mark 5:41, Mark 15:34

Earliest translations (see attached list)
Septuagint

Vulgate

Erasmus and return to Greek scholarship

Translations, polyglots and England's battle for the Bible

Reformation translators
Martin Luther

> Acts 2:38 – a pivotal verse in the Reformation

Wycliffe and Tyndale

The Geneva Bible

The Authorized King James Version

Modern English translations

What is the difference between a translation and a paraphrase?

Why so many translations?
Languages keep changing. (See the page "An Early Parallel Bible.")

Goals and needs are varied.

> Gender-inclusive translation controversy: http://www.cbmw.org/resources/tniv/inaccuracies.pdf

Translation is not an exact science.

> No punctuation in Greek or Hebrew.

> No spaces between words in Greek.

> Word order meaning.

> Greek is a much more exact language than English

>> Matthew 7:7, John 21:15, John 11:35

> Idioms

>> Hebrews 12:2

> Culture

Choosing a Translation
1 Samuel 9:2, Ephesians 1:9-10, John 3:16, Jeremiah 31:33-34

An Early Parallel Bible

In 1841, the English **Hexapla New Testament** was printed. This wonderful textual comparison tool shows in parallel columns: The 1380 Wycliff, 1534 Tyndale, 1539 Great, 1557 Geneva, 1582 Rheims, and 1611 King James versions of the entire New Testament -- with the original Greek at the top of the page.

Consider the following textual comparison of John 3:16 as they appear in many of these famous printings of the English Bible:

- **1st Ed. King James (1611):** "For God so loued the world, that he gaue his only begotten Sonne: that whosoeuer beleeueth in him, should not perish, but haue euerlasting life."

- **Rheims (1582):** "For so God loued the vvorld, that he gaue his only-begotten sonne: that euery one that beleeueth in him, perish not, but may haue life euerlasting"

- **Geneva (1557):** "For God so loueth the world, that he hath geuen his only begotten Sonne: that none that beleue in him, should peryshe, but haue euerlasting lyfe."

- **Great Bible (1539):** "For God so loued the worlde, that he gaue his only begotten sonne, that whosoeuer beleueth in him, shulde not perisshe, but haue euerlasting lyfe."

- **Tyndale (1534):** "For God so loveth the worlde, that he hath geven his only sonne, that none that beleve in him, shuld perisshe: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe."

- **Wycliff (1380):** "for god loued so the world; that he gaf his oon bigetun sone, that eche man that bileueth in him perisch not: but haue euerlastynge liif,"

It is possible to go back to manuscripts earlier than Wycliff, but the language is not easily recognizable. For example, the Anglo-Saxon manuscript of **995 AD** renders John 3:16 as:

"God lufode middan-eard swa, dat he seade his an-cennedan sunu, dat nan ne forweorde de on hine gely ac habbe dat ece lif."

EARLY TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES

1. The Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Old Testament into Greek. Begun about 250 B.C.
2. Translations of portions of the OT into Greek by Aquila and Theodotian, 2nd century A.D.
3. The Targums, free translations of the Old Testament into the popular language, the Aramaic, 2nd century A.D.
4. The Old Latin Bible, Old and New Testaments (2nd century A.D.) out of which came the Vulgate of Jerome, the text used in the Roman Catholic Church.
5. An Ancient Syriac Version, 2nd century.
6. Two Egyptian Versions in different dialects, 3rd century.
7. Peshito-Syriac, 4th century.
8. Gothic Version, 4th century.
9. Ethiopic Version, 4th century.
10. Armenian Version, 5th century.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCRIPTURES INTO ENGLISH

1. A paraphrase in poetry by Caedmon of Whitby, 680 A.D.
2. Two versifications of the Psalms, about 700 A.D.
3. The Gospel of John by Venerable Bede, finished May 27, 735 A.D.
4. Exodus and the Psalms, Alfred the Great, 901 A.D.
5. Two interlinear translations of portions of the Scriptures from the Latin Vulgate, about 950 A.D.
6. A translation of the greater part of the Bible into Norman French, 1260.
7. Four versions of the Psalms, and parts of the New Testament, 1350.
8. John Wyclif; the first complete translation into English from the Vulgate; New Testament completed in 1380, the Old Testament in 1384.
9. Tyndale; the first translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, 1525-1536.
10. Coverdale; the first complete Bible ever *printed.* It was based on the Vulgate, Luther's German Bible, and Tyndale, 1535.
11. Matthew's (really Roger's) Bible. The first authorized version, 1537.
12. Cranmer's, or the Great Bible, 1539.
13. The Geneva Bible, published by the English exiles in Geneva, the first Bible with chapter and verse divisions, based on the Vulgate, 1557-1560.
14. The Bishop's Bible, 1564-1568.
15. The Authorized, or King James Version, 1611.
16. The Revised Version; New Testament, 1881; Old Testament, 1884.

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS*

James - 50 A.D.	First Timothy - 65.
First Thessalonians - 52-53.	Titus - 65.
Second Thessalonians - 52-53.	Second Timothy - 66.
Galatians - 55.	Mark - 66.
First Corinthians - 57.	Matthew - 67.
Second Corinthians - 57.	Hebrews - 67.
Romans - 57-58.	First Peter - 67-68.
Philippians - 62-63.	Second Peter - 68.
Colossians - 62-63.	Jude - 68.
Philemon - 62-63.	Apocalypse - 68.
Ephesians - 62-63.	John - c. 85.
Luke - 63.	Epistles of John - 90-95*
Acts - 64.	*all dates of writing are approximate.*

(http://bible.crosswalk.com/OtherResources/GuidetoBibleStudy/)

APPROACHES TO IDIOM

Translations and Paraphrase of Ruth 1:17

Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: *the Lord do so to me, and more also,* if ought but death part thee and me. (KJV – King James Version)

Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. *May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely,* if anything but death separates you and me." (NIV – New International Version)

"Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. *Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse,* if anything but death parts you and me." (NASB – New American Standard Bible)

Wherever you die, I will die, and I will be buried there with you. *May the Lord strike me down* if anything but death separates you and me!" (GW - God's Word translation)

I want to die where you die and be buried there. *May the Lord do terrible things to me* if I allow anything but death to separate us." (TLB – The Living Bible paraphrase)